
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5562

AN ACT CONCERNING SPECIAL EDUCATION.

SUMMARY:

This bill requires that (1) dyslexia be added to the special education individualized education program (IEP) form as a separate category and (2) instruction in dyslexia be added to teacher preparation programs that lead to a professional teacher certification.

It also requires boards of education to notify parents or guardians of preschool special education students who reach age five or age six of their legal right to hold the child back from entering kindergarten for a year.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage for the provisions regarding dyslexia on the IEP form and notification of parental rights and July 1, 2014 for the provisions regarding dyslexia and teacher preparation.

§ 1 — DYSLEXIA ON THE IEP FORM

The bill requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to add dyslexia to the standard IEP form that planning and placement teams must use to describe the special education and related services that a special education student needs. Specifically, by January 1, 2015, SDE must add “SLD – Dyslexia” under the “specific learning disabilities” heading in the “primary disability” section of the IEP form. Dyslexia is a reading disability often characterized by difficulty in decoding letters and words. Dyslexia is currently covered by the state and federal special education laws but does not appear on the IEP form.

Current law is silent regarding what must be included on the IEP form, but state regulations require all districts use a standardized form that the State Board of Education (SBE) approves.

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

requires school districts provide appropriate educational services to students with disabilities (see BACKGROUND).

§ 2 — DYSLEXIA INSTRUCTION IN TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

The bill requires that, beginning July 1, 2015, all teacher preparation programs that lead to professional teacher certification include instruction on detection and recognition of, and appropriate interventions for, students with dyslexia. By law, these teacher preparation programs must already include instruction on literacy skills and best practices in the field of literacy training.

§ 3 — PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AND KINDERGARTEN

By law, a local or regional board of education must, whenever a child has been identified as requiring special education, immediately inform parents or guardians of the laws relating to special education and of their rights under those laws. The bill requires the information to include explicit notice of a parent's or guardian's right, under existing law, to withhold a child age (1) five from enrolling in kindergarten until age six and (2) six from enrolling until age seven.

BACKGROUND

Legislative History

The House referred the original bill (File 477) to the Appropriations Committee, which favorably reported a substitute that deletes provisions regarding a multi-tiered method of providing state grants to school districts with high-cost special education students.

IDEA and IEPs

Under IDEA (20 USC 1400 et seq.), the term IEP means a written statement for each child with a disability that details the child's academic achievement level, sets goals for future achievement, and details the specialized educational services the child needs to reach the goals. As with other states, Connecticut's special education laws (CGS §§ 10-76a to 10-76h) must conform with the federal law.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 32 Nay 1 (03/21/2014)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 46 Nay 0 (04/24/2014)